

Introduction: There is a common and dangerous misunderstanding of God that, because He IS love, people are free to disregard all His gracious provision for them. They think they can disobey Him whenever obedience is difficult. And, because He IS love, He will not discipline them, but overlook their disobedience. And, even after all this, they think God owes them every blessing because they 'believe' in Him! *** What these people forget, or perhaps in our secular world of today don't even know, is there are two requirements for anyone to receive and enjoy God's great love. First, people must love Him with all they have and fully follow Him in His ways, which they must be taught (Deuteronomy 6:4-8). Second, this love for God must result in the love of neighbor (Leviticus 19:18). Jesus applied this second requirement with these words: do to others what you would have them do to you (Matthew 6:12; Luke 6:31). Further, Jesus expanded this requirement for all those who love Him and fully follow Him: love each other sacrificially (John 13:31-34). *** The tragic incident concerning God's chosen people that we are considering today should be known to, and considered by, all people. The Covenant God of Israel, Yahweh, had just performed twelve amazing miracles to deliver His people from four hundred years of slavery in Egypt. *** They had come to the place God told Abraham He would give to Abraham's descendants. They sent men from the twelve sons of Israel to walk through the land, exploring it. Then, they would report to the people. *** A majority of ten men said it was a good land BUT the men were of great stature, giants, (Numbers 13:31-34). This caused the people's heart to melt, dissolve away. Caleb and Joshua said Yahweh would give them the land so they should faithfully follow Him. *** They rebelled in disobedience and suffered judgment. *** Let's go deeper.

I. The people of Israel grumble because of the men of the land and want to go back to Egypt; Moses, Aaron, Caleb and Joshua say the land is very good, do not rebel, trust Yahweh; they rebel, Yahweh comes to judge. (Numbers 14:1-10)

- A. The people grumble against Moses and Aaron due to the majority report and want to return to Egypt. (Verses 1-4)
1. Then all the congregation lifted up and gave their voice and wept that night; then they murmured against Moses and Aaron, all the people of Israel; then the whole congregation said to them: If only we had died in Egypt or the wilderness, if only we had died. (Verses 1-2)
Fear: As already said, they were afraid of the giants in the land and that the land would 'devour' them.
Grumbling: They grumbled against their civic leader (judge) and their advocate to God (priest).
 2. And why does Yahweh bring us into this land to fall by the sword? Our wives and little ones will be plunder; if not (perhaps is) better to go back to Egypt; They said each to his brother: we will choose a captain, and we will go back to Egypt. (Verses 3-4)
Choose slavery: Their 'if only's are weak, but they are acting without faith in their deliverer Yahweh.
- B. Moses and Aaron implore the people; Caleb and Joshua say the land is exceedingly great, Yahweh will give it and do not rebel; they do and Yahweh comes to judge. (Verses 5-10)
1. Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the 'sons' of Israel; and Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who searched the land, tore their clothes. (Verses 5-6)
Leaders: The judge and the priest fell on their faces (before Yahweh) in front of the people as an example of their great concern over them choosing to disobey Yahweh.
Explorers: A minority of the explorers who searched the land (two of twelve, seventeen percent) tore their clothes in mourning as did Jacob over Joseph (Genesis 37:34) and as Joel would later command idolaters (Joel 2:12-13).
 2. Then they said to all: The land which we passed through to search it, the land is good – exceedingly, exceedingly! (Verse 7)
Land is good: Caleb and Joshua could not contain themselves in expressing the quality of the land!
 3. IF Yahweh delights in us, He (has as good as) brought us into this land; and He (has as good as) given to us a land flowing with milk and honey. (Verse 8)
Yahweh: They have extreme faith in Yahweh that if He delights in His people they will possess a land flowing with 'milk and honey' a metaphor for nutritious and sweet food, as in Eden (Genesis 2:15-16).
 4. Only, against Yahweh you will not rebel, and you no way will fear the people of the land because they (are) bread to us: their protection has been removed; Yahweh is with us and you will not fear them. (Verse 9)
Yahweh: They command the people not to disobey God in rebellion: He is (still) with them.
People: They doubly command the people to not fear the people of the land: 'they are bread' means: Yahweh being with us, we will 'devour' these giants as we would a loaf of bread.
 5. Then all the congregation said to stone them with stones; and, the glory of Yahweh appeared in Tent of Meeting to all the 'sons' of Israel. (Verse 10)
Total disobedience: Because everyone is ready to stone Caleb and Joshua to death, they are acting out their disobedience to God.
Glory of Yahweh: The glory of Yahweh is made manifest in His holy place as He comes to punish.

Disobedience leads to punishment with few exceptions

II. Because of their rebellion, Yahweh judges His people; and, Yahweh says because Caleb fully followed Him, he will inherit land – and he does. (Numbers 14:11-16, 24; Joshua 14:6-14)

- A. Because His people despised Him, and rebelled against Him so soon after His miracles delivered them from slavery, Yahweh judges His people. (Numbers 14:11-12)
1. Then Yahweh said to Moses: until when (how long) will this people despise Me, and until when (how long) will they not believe in Me, in all the (miraculous) signs I have done among them? (Verse 11)
People despise Yahweh: It has been about four months (Numbers 1:1; 10:11) since the ten plagues on the Egyptians and the parting and closing of the Red Sea, yet they all disobey Him in unbelief!
 2. I will strike them with the plagues, and I will dispossess them, and I will make thee a nation greater and mightier than them. (Verses 12)
He will His smite people: At this point, Yahweh will wipe out all His chosen people and start all over again with Moses, as with Noah and the flood (Genesis 6:1-9:17).

Application: We must realize through this painful story in Israel's history that disobedience to God leads to strong punishment, unlike the majority opinions in our world today.

Disobedience leads to punishment with few exceptions

- B. But Moses intercedes with Yahweh for the sake of His reputation among the nations; Yahweh relents, but says only Caleb will inherit land – and he does. (*Numbers 14:13-16, 24*)
1. Then Moses said to Yahweh: (have as good as already) heard the Egyptians, because Thou brought up in Thy might this people from among (Pharaoh); and, (as good as already) they have told the inhabitants of this land. (*Verse 13-14a*)
Egyptians will hear: Moses reminds Yahweh that Egypt and Pharaoh have first-hand experience of His might. But, if He kills all His people, they will surely hear and tell those dwelling in this land.
 2. They have heard that Thou, Yahweh, (are) in the midst of this people: eye to eye Thou have been seen Yahweh, and Thy cloud (is) standing over them: pillar of cloud Thou (are) going before them daily; and, pillar of fire nightly. (*Verses 14b-c*)
Presence and protection: Egypt has been told of the intimate presence and powerful protection of Yahweh for His people.
 3. Now, if Thou have put to death this people as one man, (have as good as already) said the nations which have heard Thy fame ... (*Verse 15*)
IF you slay: Moses is making a case in his petitionary prayer, that if Yahweh instantly wipes out all His people, it would affect His fame among the nations.
 4. ... because was not able Yahweh to bring this people into the land He swore to them, then He slaughtered them in the wilderness. (*Verse 16*)
Say Yahweh NOT able: The nations will say Yahweh slaughtered His people because He was not strong enough to fulfill the oath He made to His people to give them they land.
Modification: Moses is concerned for Yahweh's reputation. As a result, Yahweh stretched out the timeframe of their deaths to forty years, but the ten explorers were immediately struck down. Joshua and Caleb will possess their shares of the land (verses 17-38).

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Application: May we all pray to be given Moses' heart for intercessory prayer, based on God's character, so He will pull back on His judgment of our nation today.

5. And My servant Caleb, because was a different spirit in him and he fully followed Me, I (have as good as) brought him into the land which he went there, and his descendants will possess it. (*Verse 24*)
Fully follow: Because Caleb had another spirit that caused him to fully follow Yahweh, He will bring Caleb into the land, but the others, as their punishment, will all die in the wilderness not seeing the land.

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- C. Because Caleb faithfully followed Yahweh forty-five years, including five years driving out deplorably idolatrous people, he receives his land inheritance in Judah. (*Joshua 14:6-14*)

1. The people of Judah drew near to Joshua at Gilgal and Caleb said: thou know the word Yahweh said to Moses concerning me and thee at Kadesh-Barnea; I (was) forty years old when Yahweh's servant Moses sent me to explore the land; I brought to him word as in my heart; but my brothers who went up with me caused the heart of the people to dissolve, and I fully followed Yahweh my God. (*Verses 6-8*)
Caleb to Joshua: Caleb tells to Joshua what we heard, adding he was forty years, and testifying he fully followed Yahweh. Moses added Kadesh-Barnea when he retold the story (*Numbers 32:8-12*).

Application: We must be inspired by this story to have the heart of Caleb to always fully follow God.

All fully following Yahweh receive a good inheritance

Brothers: Caleb tells of the terrible effect of the bad report given by his brother Israelite explorers.

2. Then Moses swore that day: if not (surely) the land on which thy foot has tread will be to thee an inheritance, and to thy children forever, because thou fully followed Yahweh my God. (*Verse 9*)
Moses: Caleb further recalls Moses swearing to him concerning his inheritance. For a second time he testifies he fully followed Yahweh.
3. Now behold! Yahweh has kept me alive forty-five years since Yahweh spoke to Moses when Israel walked in the wilderness; and behold! I (am) this day eighty-five years old. (*Verse 10*)
Forty-five years: The extra five years were for the time it took for Joshua to lead Yahweh's people (with His help) to drive out most of the people in the land.
4. Still, I this day (am) strong as in that day Moses sent me; as my strength then (is) as my strength now to war: to go out and to come. (*Verses 11-12*)
Still strong: Caleb is as robust at eighty-five years old as when he was in his prime!
5. Then Joshua blessed him, then he gave Hebron to Caleb for (his) inheritance; so Hebron was to Caleb an inheritance to this day, because he fully followed Yahweh the God of Israel. (*Verses 13-14*)
Joshua blessed: Joshua (Yah-Savior), Yahweh's chosen successor to Moses to lead His people into the land He swore to them (*Genesis 15:12-21*), blessed his fellow faithful land explorer of forty-five years ago with his land inheritance as Yahweh and Moses had spoken.
Hebron: Hebron was in Judah, Caleb's tribe (*Numbers 13:6*), in the foothills twenty miles south of Jerusalem. As long as Judah was independent, his descendants lived there because *all fully following Yahweh receive a good inheritance*.

Conclusion: The people of Israel grumbled because the men of the land God said He would give them were so strong that they wanted to go back to Egypt. Caleb and Joshua say the land is very good, do not rebel, but trust Yahweh. They disobeyed and Yahweh comes to judge. He says He will kill them and start over; but, Moses intercedes. Caleb was singled out for fully following Yahweh, and forty-five years later he received Hebron in the land.

Only one of two, because *disobedience leads to punishment with few exceptions*.